1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa



are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt



smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

464 571 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the [505 292 494] ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent. When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have [497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 181 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 519 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his outlook in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

## 11.

## The Straggler.

539x
788

The pilgrimage to Mecca, which every pious Moslem is bound to make at least once in his life, is a long one; it goes by land and by sea, and for people unaccustomed to travel, it is attended with many cares and dangers. For this reason the pilgrims usually combine into caravans of some size. The little song pictures the perplexity of a straggler, who has missed connection with his caravan and is now totally at a loss.

[484]

Lines 1—2 are the words of another, who calls to the pilgrim: "Enough for to-day, for thou canst not possibly reach thy goal to-day!" Lines 3—7 are spoken by the pilgrim.

*Sams el-'aṣāri ṛarabit,*
*yalli biladak bu'ad!*
*Wana biladi Mikketi!*
*u-min ēn arūḥ?*
*u-min ēn âgi?*
*u-min ēn asaiyir markabi*
*u-min ēn azūrak, ya nabi?*

"The afternoon sun has gone down,
Thou, whose country is afar off!" —
"O, the land I would go to is Mecca!
How shall I go?
How shall I reach my goal?
And how shall I sail my ship?
How shall I visit thee, O Prophet?"

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8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

*Raḥet tekubbĕ-trabha* 539x
*we-zaḥferān fi-kmamha.* 527
*we-gōzha rāḥ eṣ-ṣa'īd* 821
*yegīb-liha baškūr ḥadīd,*
*tiḥbiz-bo kaḥk el-'īd, kaḥk el-'īd.*

Come out again, O sun, dear sun,
For 'Ali's and Moḥammed's sakes
And Faṭne's, daughter of the Prophet!
Her dough stands there before her.
She went to empty out her dust;
Saffron colored were her sleeves.
Her goodman has gone to the Ṣa'īd,
To fetch for her an iron hook,
That she may bake with it the cakes for the feast,
the cakes for the feast!

1. Literally: "open yourself"; compare No. 19, l. 2.

6. Upon raising the arm which supports the basket, the sleeve of the yellow, under garment is visible. The outer garments of the peasant women are generally black. [291]

7. Southern Upper Egypt (eṣ-ṣa'īd, as the region south of Aṣyūṭ is called) is often a synonym for a long distance. A similar example in No. 128, l. 1. Aṣyūṭ is about as far from Sāqqāra as New York is from Washington, or Davenport from London. [195] [484]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt



gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not